Myths abound on homosexuals

G.T. 4-19-91

Recent editorials condemning equal rights for gay people are sad commentaries on just how vitally education is needed to abolish the myths and lies people who don't know homosexuals well still use to judge and condemn them. To those of us with gay friends and family, who are educated, and know the truth, it is heartbreaking.

To reduce the uniqueness and complexity of any human being to a mere "act" is not only homophobic, but insane.

The average homosexual is, in truth, statistically no more sexual than the average heterosexual. We don't evaluate all straight people by the pedophiles, porn kings and prostitutes among them, yet we believe all homosexuals must be perverted sex fiends because of the behavior of a small percentage who get the publicity. Promoting this fearful image/expectation also helps us avoid the fact that we work and play with gay people regularly.

Yes, many gays are promiscuous — just like many heterosexuals. Many are also celibate, or in monogamous relationships, just like heterosexuals. And AIDS is now spreading fastest in the heterosexual community.

Being gay is not so simple as sexual behavior, which anyone can explore. Being gay embodies a natural and all-encompassing truth about oneself that some discover on their journey of life. Why would anyone choose a same-sex partner in life knowing society, family and church will hate and reject them — especially when so much sex is readily available in the heterosexual world? Love and human bonding play as large a role in the homosexual world as they do in the heterosexual — a much larger role than sex. Myths ignore that reality.

Recent issues of NETWORK, the psychologist's magazine, have focused on gays, dispelling every myth supported by recent anti-gay editorials . . . including the one that orientation can be successfully changed. These same letters imply that heterosexuals must utilize sex for procreation only, within a monogamous marriage. Do heterosexuals forget that a lot of their own sexual acts are considered by church and/or state as either a sin, a crime, deviant or "harmful" behavior?

It seems ironic that our society accepts violence, rape, murder, war, hate and bigotry as "normal" — and considers heterosexual acts, regardless of perversity, as "natural." Yet we leap in terror to condemn any expressions of love in this world if the gender isn't "right." It's a pathetic statement on our biased values and fears.

I applaud the efforts and sensitivity of the previous City Council, and hope that such intelligence and foresight will continue to direct the new council in unifying all the peoples of this city.

— Donna J. Arnink
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Gays want end to discrimination

G.T. 3-5-92

When I first read Donald Erickson's letter ("Don't discriminate, for or against," March 1), suggesting that lesbian and gay citizens should surrender themselves to discrimination so as to ease "resentment and hatred" against them, I thought it merely a laughable curiosity. The more I reflected, though, the more chilling its reasoning became.

Carried to its logical conclusion, one might argue that gays and lesbians should simply report to the nearest police station and go directly to jail — to assure people that they had no intention of claiming any rights whatsoever. Excuse me, but I thought that this was the United States of America — not Nazi Germany.

Erickson's defense of the proposed anti-gay state constitutional amendment predictably refuses to admit precisely what the amendment does. It singles out one group of citizens — lesbian and and gays — and provides that this group of citizens may never be legally protected from discrimination. Now, singling out one group of citizens and saying that they can never be protected by the law is itself discrimination, no matter how you try to cover it up.

If anyone doubts this, ask yourself whether the same proposal would be discriminatory if it singled out some other group — say, Jews, or Moslems or Christians — and said that group could never be protected by anti-discrimination laws. In other words, that it's open season for an employer to fire someone just because that person happens to be Jewish, or Moslem or Christian. Would you support that?

And if you think that discriminating against a group of citizens is acceptable because you don't like them anyway, what happens when someone decides that they don't like you? Are you fair game?

Forbidding discrimination against gay and lesbian citizens does not "favor" gays and lesbians, just as forbidding discrimination against Christians does not "favor" Christians. It simply ensures that everyone will be treated fairly.

Erickson's assertion that gays and lesbians want "more rights and privileges than the rest of us have" is nonsense. Gays and lesbians simply want an end to discrimination.

I certainly agree with Erickson's statement that "our society needs unity." But enacting legal segregation against a group of citizens — any group — is hardly the way to achieve unity.

— Robin Miller
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